

Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal - September 5, 2008

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Friday, September 5, 2008 - 2:54 PM CDT | Modified: Friday, September 5, 2008 - 3:04 PM

Pawlenty, mayors call convention "a hit"

Minneapolis / St. Paul Business Journal

State and local officials gathered in St. Paul Friday to declare the just-completed **Republican National Convention** a success, saying that the Twin Cities metro area won acclaim and new business from conventioners and visitors during the four-day event.

Gov. Tim Pawlenty said that feedback from attendees and media had been strongly positive and would help boost Minnesota's image and business prospects going forward. "This is going to have a lasting impact on the state," he said.

Pawlenty appeared with host committee officials, Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak, St. Paul Mayor Chris Coleman and Bloomington Mayor Gene Winstead.

Coleman, responding to a question about complaints from local businesses who said they were shut out of an economic windfall by the security measures for the convention, acknowledged that "some merchants didn't do as well as we would have liked," but went on to say that it was a success because they got exposure and business leading up to the convention.

Hotel occupancy rates in downtown Minneapolis ranged from 90 percent to 95 percent compared to 50 percent to 60 percent during the same period over the last few years. Hotel occupancy rates in Saint Paul also were 90 percent to 95 percent compared to 70 percent.

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